OFFICE OF

The First Presidency

of the

Church of Jesus Christ

of

Latter-day Saints.

UT.1
1903

Salt Lake City, Utah, Aug. 10, 1903

DEAR BROTHER:—

Owing to some confusion that has existed in the past in relation to recommending young men to take the missionary course of study in our Church schools, it is thought necessary in order to establish a uniformity respecting this matter, to address you this communication.

First. It is decided by the First Presidency that the missionary classes in the Church schools already designated to give such course of instruction shall continue during the coming school year; and that a reasonable number of young men be recommended to President Smith by the bishops and presidents of stakes to take this course.

It is suggested that greater care be taken in selecting young men than in the past. Only men who are mentally and physically sound should be recommended; for such are the hardships incident to missionary labors that only men of good health and strong physical constitutions can endure them, and it is therefore unwise to recommend those who do not possess those physical qualifications. Equal, if not even greater, care should be exercised with reference to the moral and spiritual standing of those recommended for the missionary course. Instructed by past experience, we urge that you who are charged with the duty of recommending these students make stricter inquiry into their moral and spiritual standing. Where young men have sinned and heartily repented and forsaken the evil, they may be favorably considered for the missionary course; but certainly men who are unrepentant of past sinful conduct, or who are otherwise unworthy of the fellowship of the Saints, should not be called to the work of crying repentance to others. We do not wish to be justly subject to the reproach that we send our missionaries to the world to reform them. Let the work of reform be done at home. So far as it is possible also, young men should be selected for recommendation who have given some evidence of the workings of the Spirit of the Lord in their own souls, as manifested in their interest in their quorum and other meetings, or by a desire to perform missionary labor. This active interest, or the presence of the desire referred to, is evidence that the Spirit of the Lord is working with such men, preparing them for future usefulness in His kingdom, and they should be sought for and recommended for this missionary course. You should assure yourself by private personal enquiry of each person whom you suggest, that he is thoroughly worthy of your recommendation.

Due regard should be paid to the ability of those recommended for the missionary course to meet the necessary expenses connected with it. No one's name should be suggested who is not personally able to bear this expense, or whose parents or friends are not willing to meet it.

It should be understood by the Presidents of Stakes and Bishops that they go no further in this matter than to recommend the names of young men for the missionary course. In every case after the names recommended have been considered, they will be called by the President of the Church; and the President's letter calling a young man to take the course should be presented by him at the college or academy to which he goes as his credentials of admittance. The persons called should be instructed that they are not at liberty to leave the school to which they are sent at their own pleasure; they can only be honorably released by the authority which called them. We emphasize this point because much confusion has obtained in these classes in the past by reason of so many thinking they were at liberty to leave the school at their pleasure, a confusion we desire to avoid in the future.

The missionary course is intended to be preliminary to a mission, but it does not necessarily follow that a call to a mission will come in each case immediately after the course is finished; generally speaking however it should be understood that a mission will soon follow attendance upon the course of instruction.

Young men now attending or who have attended the regular course of study at our Church schools should not be recommended for the missionary course, as the regular college course is calculated to fit them for missionary work. Returned missionaries should not be recommended for reasons that are obvious.

Praying that the blessing of the Lord will be with you in this as in all your labors, we are,

Your Brethren,

Jos. F. Smith

John R. Winder

Anthon H. Lund

First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.